

March 7, 2023

**H.B. No. 6829 (Raised) AN ACT PROHIBITING ELECTRONIC BOOK AND DIGITAL AUDIOBOOK LICENSE AGREEMENTS OR CONTRACTS FROM INCLUDING CERTAIN TERMS.**

Dear Honorable Members of the Planning and Development Committee:

I am testifying in **support** of **HB 6800 An Act Concerning Electronic Book and Digital Audiobook Licensing**.

My name is Samantha Lee, I am a public librarian at Enfield Public Libraries and a resident of Tolland. During the ongoing COVID pandemic, my library saw a marked increase in the use of electronic books and digital audiobooks. And while we were happy to be able to provide a safer format for library lending, we were constrained by our budget and the exorbitant pricing for materials. We continue to struggle against the restrictions imposed by publishers as library patrons continue to use e-formats for their library materials. We cannot meet their needs because of these unfair licensing limitations.

Unlike consumers, libraries pay licenses to aggregators for e-materials and cannot buy direct from publishers. This means we generally only get one title at a time – which eventually expires, has fewer rights and more restrictions than consumers have. Unlike physical materials which we may own indefinitely, lend generously and can purchase at a significant discount, licensing terms for digital materials hinder our ability to serve our patrons. A robust digital library collection is impossible under these terms, even as demand and use increases.

Aside from the issue about pricing and cost, a burden on taxpayers no less, this is an equity and accessibility issue. Libraries strive to serve everyone, and digital formats are excellent for those with poor vision or dyslexia who need accessible fonts to read. Likewise, our low-vision patrons appreciate digital audiobooks, accessible from home. But again, the restrictive terms limit our ability to serve those patrons fully.

I strongly support HB 6800. I hope Co he Committee and Connecticut lawmakers will listen to their constituents who support this bill and voted for you in order to be heard. Together, we can ensure that electronic resources are available at a fair price to libraries and the taxpayers who use them.

Thank you for your time,

Samantha Lee  
Tolland